UW-River Falls is committed to providing a safe environment in which to learn, teach, perform research, work, study, and visit. Because the Coronavirus (COVID-19) can spread quickly and cause widespread illness, the University will implement measures it deems necessary in order to protect faculty, staff, students, contractors, volunteers, and visitors from potential exposure to this disease.

Wisconsin State Statutes § 36.09 and § 36.11 provide authority to the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to protect the health and safety of those on University of Wisconsin System campuses. This authority has been delegated in part to the Chancellors of each UW campus. Regent Policy Document 23.2 provides authority to the Chancellor to develop public health policies and require those on campus to comply with those policies.

In line with recent COVID-19 guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wisconsin Department of Health Services and local public health agencies, use of face coverings continues to be recommended in indoor public spaces by individuals five and older who are not currently fully vaccinated.

This policy is being updated to align with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People, which was issued July 27, 2021. Due to the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus currently circulating in the United States, the CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission. The CDC continues to recommend that unvaccinated people get vaccinated and continue masking until they are fully vaccinated.

Accordingly, effective August 10, 2021 and continuing until otherwise announced by the University, the following guidelines are in place for all university students, employees and visitors to campus:

DEFINITIONS.

“Face covering” means a piece of cloth or other material that is worn to cover the nose and mouth completely, also referred to as a “face mask”. A “face covering” or “face mask” includes but is not limited to a cloth face mask, a disposable or paper mask, a neck gaiter, or a religious face mask. A “face covering” or “face mask” does not include face shields, mesh masks, masks with holes or openings, or masks with vents.

“Physical distancing” means maintaining at least six (6) feet of distance from other individuals who are not members of your household or living unit.

“Fully vaccinated” means it has been ≥ 2 weeks after a person has received the second dose in a 2–dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥ 2 weeks after a person has received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen); there is currently no post-vaccination time limit on fully vaccinated status.
1. Face coverings.
   UWRF will be adhering to Pierce County Public Health and CDC guidance with regards to use of face coverings on its campus. At the time of the August 2021 policy revision, that guidance is as follows (future changes to guidance may result in further updates to this policy):
   a. As stipulated by Pierce County Public Health, individuals who are not fully vaccinated are required to wear a face covering in all indoor public spaces on campus lands where physical distancing of six (6) feet is not possible, other than students in their assigned residence hall rooms and employees when alone in a private, unshared office or lab. Public Health Advisory Order Requiring Masks To Be Worn In Indoor, Public Spaces: https://cms5.revize.com/revize/piercewi/Document_center/Department/Public%20Health/Publication%20and%20Data/Media%20Releases/2021/PH%20advisory%204.1.2021%20(1).docx.pdf
   b. If case transmission rates in Pierce County are at a substantial or high level as defined by the CDC: https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view, all individuals regardless of vaccination status will be expected to wear a face covering indoors where physical distancing is not possible.

2. Exceptions:
   a. Individuals participating in outdoor activities do not need to wear a face covering, although physical distancing is encouraged.
   b. Individuals who are otherwise required to wear a face covering may remove the face covering in the following situations:
      i. When eating or drinking
      ii. When it is not conducive to performing a task (i.e. brushing teeth, showering, etc.) when living in the residence halls.
   c. Other exceptions to this guidance may be in place for certain areas of campus, such as the C.H.I.L.D. Center, University Preschool, Fitness Center, WIAC/Athletics, or farms, where face covering use is not feasible or safe. In such cases, other safeguards such as barriers or physical distancing will be utilized if possible. Use of those spaces is conditioned on compliance with those other safeguards. Approved exceptions to this policy will be posted in the designated areas. University offices in need of an exception to this policy should write to administrative-policy@uwrf.edu.

2. Other recommended health and safety practices:
   a. Frequent handwashing with soap and water, or the use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not readily available.
   b. Engage in daily self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19, and if symptoms exist, follow the direction provided by university or public health officials.
   c. Cooperate and comply with university and public health officials regarding contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation processes or directives.
   d. While the University has adopted sanitation protocols to reduce the spread of the virus, individual units are expected to be responsible for their office spaces and to appropriately sanitize items and surfaces on a regular basis.
3. Other Considerations:
   a. Faculty and staff may request (but may not independently require) that students in their class or office space wear face coverings outside of campus policy. It must also be made clear to the students that there are no negative repercussions to them, grading or otherwise, relative to compliance with that request.
   b. UWRF is not mandating that any student, faculty or staff member receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Individuals are encouraged to get vaccinated if eligible, as achieving a high vaccination rate appears to the best possible hope of mitigating the risks associated with COVID-19.
   c. Vaccination status is confidential and should not be discussed or disclosed outside of a conversation with any employee or student who might self-disclose this information.

In accordance with its mission and values, as well as Board of Regents guidance, UW-River Falls will prioritize the health and safety of students, faculty, staff and surrounding communities when making decisions regarding activity on campus in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Safety measures taken by the University, including those noted above, are intended to help reduce the spread of this illness. Despite these efforts, however, the University cannot guarantee that individuals will not be exposed to or develop this illness. Therefore, individuals should rely on their own judgment (as well as the advice of their health care provider) to determine whether it safe for them to return to campus.

Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals unable to wear a face covering. Requests for reasonable accommodations are considered on a case-by-case basis. It is the responsibility of the individual requesting the accommodation to contact the appropriate office below to obtain an approved reasonable accommodation.

- Employees requesting a reasonable accommodation, should contact Human Resources and complete the Reasonable Accommodation request form located here.
- Students requesting a reasonable accommodation due to disability, should contact Ability Services and may find more information here.
- Students requesting a reasonable accommodation for a reason other than a disability, should contact the Director of Student Success.

Students with an approved reasonable accommodation will receive an approved accommodation form from the Ability Services Office and must present that upon request to a university official or instructor.

A student or employee who has been granted a reasonable accommodation by the university is not required to explain to others the underlying basis for the accommodation.

Compliance

The health of our community is everyone’s responsibility. Wearing a mask is one of the most important ways to keep our campus community safe and healthy.

UW-River Falls expects all members of the university community to behave responsibly with respect for the health and safety of others and furthermore expects all students and employees to cooperate and comply with university and public health officials regarding contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation processes or directives.
Individuals who do not adhere to this policy directive may be asked or directed to leave campus. Students and employees who choose not to comply with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting a concern

Reports about concerns may be made electronically via the UW-River Falls “Report It” website, using the reporting form for general student concerns or employee concerns.

- Employees may inform university officials about a specific concern about noncompliance by completing and submitting a report. Additionally, an employee with a concern about noncompliance or general questions about this policy may contact their immediate supervisor, department chair/dean, division head, or human resources.
- A student with a concern about noncompliance or general questions about this policy may complete and submit a report via the Report It website or may directly contact Residence Life (for matters related to the Residence Halls), the Dean of applicable college (for concerns in classrooms), or the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Excellence & Student Success.

For more information regarding this policy, please see below “Related Documents.”

No Discrimination

Consistent with the university’s policies against discrimination, UW-River Falls does not tolerate discrimination, profiling, bias, or any form of harassment, based on race, disability, or other protected class, in conjunction with this policy or any other COVID-related policies. Any reported incidents will be addressed in accordance with university policy.

Severability

If any provision of this policy or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, then the remainder of the policy, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this policy are severable.

Authority

The UW-River Falls Chancellor approves this policy in accordance with the Administrative Policy process. The Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance is responsible for the substance of, and compliance with all administrative policies. The Policy Owner (Responsible Office) is responsible for the administration and maintenance of this policy. Request an exception to this policy by writing to administrative-policy@uwrf.edu.

Sanctions and Appeals Process

Failure to adhere to the provisions of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary action as provided under existing procedures applicable to students, faculty, and staff, and/or civil or criminal prosecution.
University Responsibilities
Human Resources owns and manages policies that fall under its area of responsibility. Human Resources oversees the development and review of the policy.

Related Documents
- Board of Regents Resolution 11, approved July 9, 2020
- UW-River Falls Website, Falcons Forward, https://www.uwrf.edu/Falcons-Forward/Index.cfm

Contact
Please direct questions about this policy to administrative-policy@uwrf.edu.